OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
4-SEP-1962
KOVILPATTI
RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING

Panchayati Raj

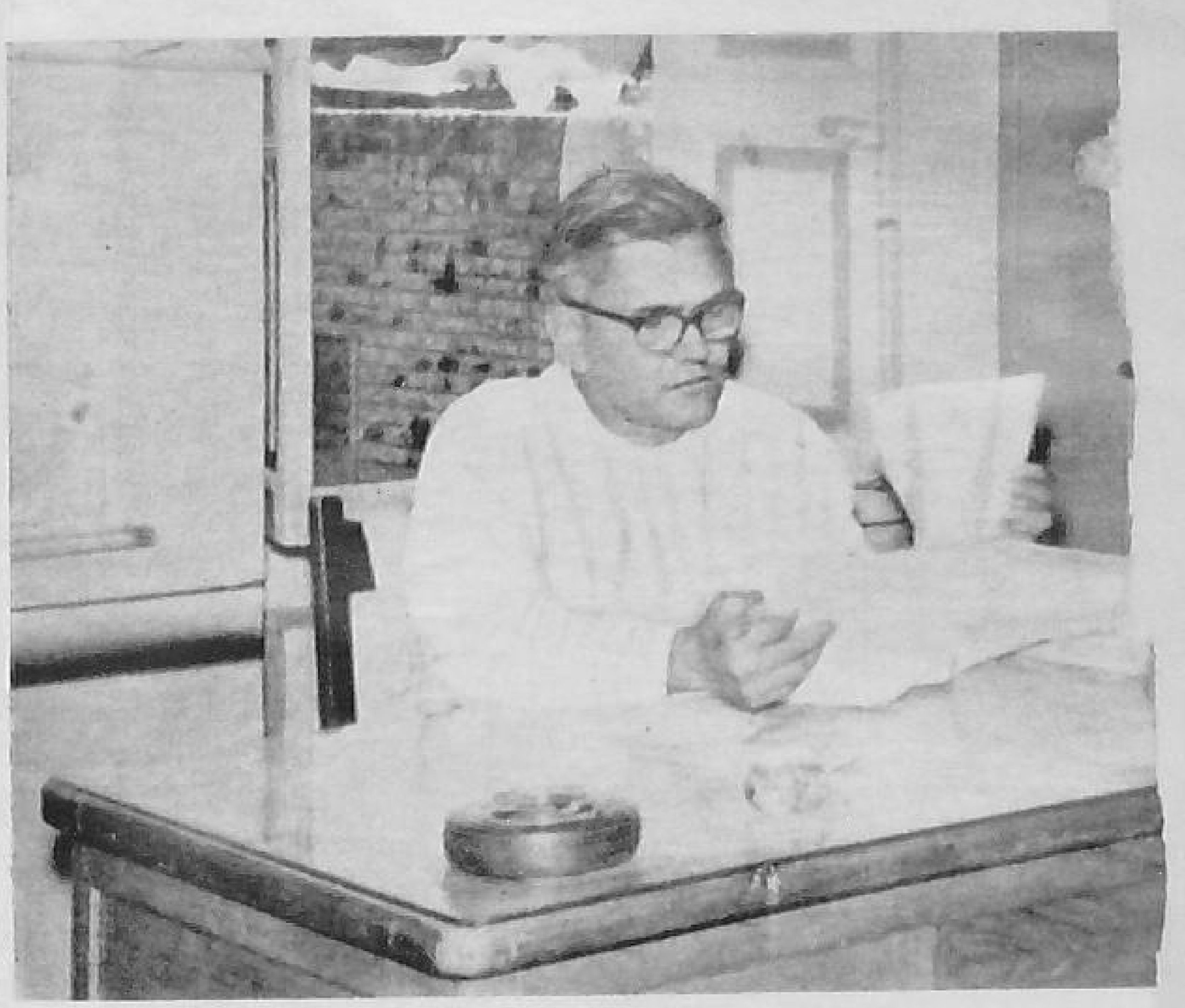
JULY 1962

HRI RAOJI BHAI MOTI HAI PATEL—*a model rmer and Sarpanch from ujarat. By earning a net ofit of Rs. 40,000 from his acre farm, he has proved at farming can be as ying as any industry or siness. In the picture, he seen lighting a Cow-dung s lamp in his farm.* *(See ory on page 8)*

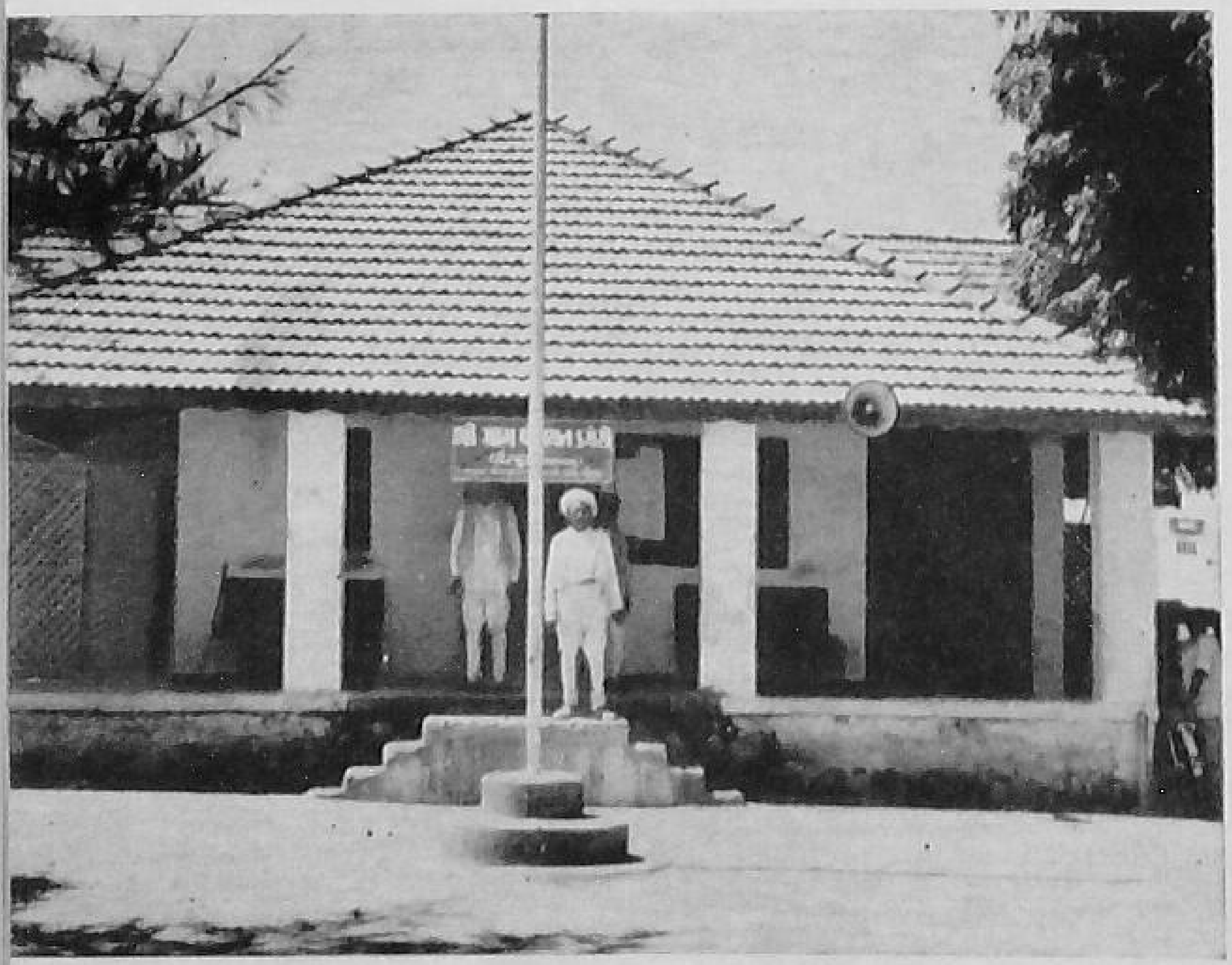
PANCHAYATS IN GUJARAT

OFFICE AND ESTABLISHMENT

A stately building which serves as a Panchayat ghar in village Ranoli.



Shri Gordhan Dass Bhai Patel, Vice-chairman District Panchayat Mandal, Khera, is going through papers in the office.



A simple but artistic bungalow serves as an office of the Village Panchayat at Virpur.

The Virpur Panchayat is in session. Placed on the ta a telephone for use of the Panchayat.

Vol. III JULY 1962 No. 4

ASADHA-1884

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LETTERS

PROBLEMS OF A V.L.W.

Sir,

I AM sorry to let you know that for the last four years, I am not blessed to go through your journal "Gram Sevak". Infact, none of the V.L.Ws in my Block or even in the District as a whole, gets an opportunity to have a look at the journal.

I have studied upto Intermediate. I am in Government service since 5-1-52, when I joined as a Fieldman. After I had undergone the necessary training I was posted as V.L.W. in October 1956. From that time onwards, I have received neither any increment in pay nor any promotion. I tried hard to get success in my career. But with all my capacities and qualifications I have failed to achieve the goal. This does not mean that I could not make any useful contribution to the service of the community as a V.L.W. I have served my people to the best of my ability and I do believe, my services have not gone in vain. But in so far as my personal career is concerned, I have proved a failure. I honestly feel that as a Gram Sevak, the development of my personality,—socially, financially mentally, and morally has come to a dead end. Now I have resolved to give up the job in favour of a teacher's profession where I am likely to get more peace of mind and better prospects. What is the good of my blaming any one for the mess I find myself in? Perhaps my faculties and assets are not fit for the job. I only want to know that perhaps there might be many more introverts like myself and possibly the Government might have some plans to help them. Please treat this request as a personal one.

21-4-62 Yours etc.

Distt. Cuddapah. XXXX

The above letter though received with a request that it may be treated as personal, is being published by us because of several issues raised therein which are of fundamental and general interest. To avoid embarrassment to our correspondent, we are omitting his name. It is surprising to note that there should be a V.L.W. who is unaware of the fact that the erstwhile "Gram Sevak" journal was converted into "Panchayati Raj" and is being brought out as such for the last three years. Perhaps there is truth in what he says that the V.L.Ws do not get an opportunity to go through the journal (in English or in the regional language). Would other V.L.Ws please share with us their experiences in this regard?

Coming to the sense of frustration expressed by him, it may be a personal one and others may not be able to help him much except by way of counselling him patience. One cannot put in his best in any sphere, if one feels that one's prospects and chances of promotion in that line are limited. Sometimes back the Central Government had suggested to the State Governments the following concrete steps for giving encouragement to the really deserving V.L.Ws: —(i) The V.L.W's Competition Scheme, (ii) the V.L.W's scholarship scheme for training in Rural Institutes, (iii) and the institution of awards in the shape of 'Sanads' or certificates of appreciation with or without cash for the recognition of meritorious work in the field of community service. It is for the V.L.Ws to let us know whether or not these measures have had any effect on improving their prospects—Ed.

PANCHAYATS & BUDGETS

Sir,

THE PANCHAYATS generally prepare their budgets, in a faulty and confused manner. From my experience of the way in which they prepare their budgets, I can say that they do not do any planning before preparing their budgets. To be on the safe side, they just provide some amount against each and every item of expenditure mentioned in the budget form. Consequently, the actual expenditure turns out to be quite different from what had been budgeted for. There might be some items on which no expenditure is actually incurred and others on which more is spent than was provided for. This leads to complications later on. The budget is to some extent, flexible and the amounts spent under various heads may be reappropriated. But this is possible only within certain limits, beyond which sanction of the higher authorities is needed. Therefore, the right course for the Panchayats to adopt is that the order of priorities should be determined first and the items should be provided for in the budget in order of the felt-needs against which the Panchayat can contribute its share of expenditure out of the limited funds at its disposal. Of course, there are items which entail recurring expenditure every year, *e.g.*, school or a library. These have to be provided in the budget every year.

Yours etc.

L. M. Deshpande

2-5-62 Extension Officer

Wardha, (Social education)

Maharashtra

* * *

PUBLISHING BULLETIN

Sir,

IN MADRAS, some 40 village Panchayats are grouped into one Panchayat Union and there is an administrative establishment for it. In order to educate the villager it is necessary that the President of the Panchayat Union should publish a bulletin inducating the several activities carried on in the Panchayat Union. This will enable the government also to assess the utility of these panchayats.

17-4-62 Yours etc.

R. V. Iyer

391, Abjiannavattaram,

Tanjore.

* * *

TAXES VERSUS GOVERNMENT AID

Sir,

FROM AN article in the January issue of Panchayati Raj, I have come to know that in West Bengal, Union Boards are now being replaced by Gram and Anchal Panchayats. I have a bitter experience of these new Panchayats. They have doubled the taxes levied by the former Union Boards. Many new taxes have been imposed. It is a heavy burden on the poor villagers. For example, cart-tax is a great burden on the poor farmers. The deficit should be met with by a Grant-in-aid from the State Government. I suggest that the State should offer a grant of 2.5 crores of rupees instead of Rs. one crore to the panchayats. Then there will be no necessity of doubling the taxes or imposing any new taxes by the panchayats.

24-4-62 Yours etc.

Syama Charan Ghosh

Joteram,

Distt. Burdwan,

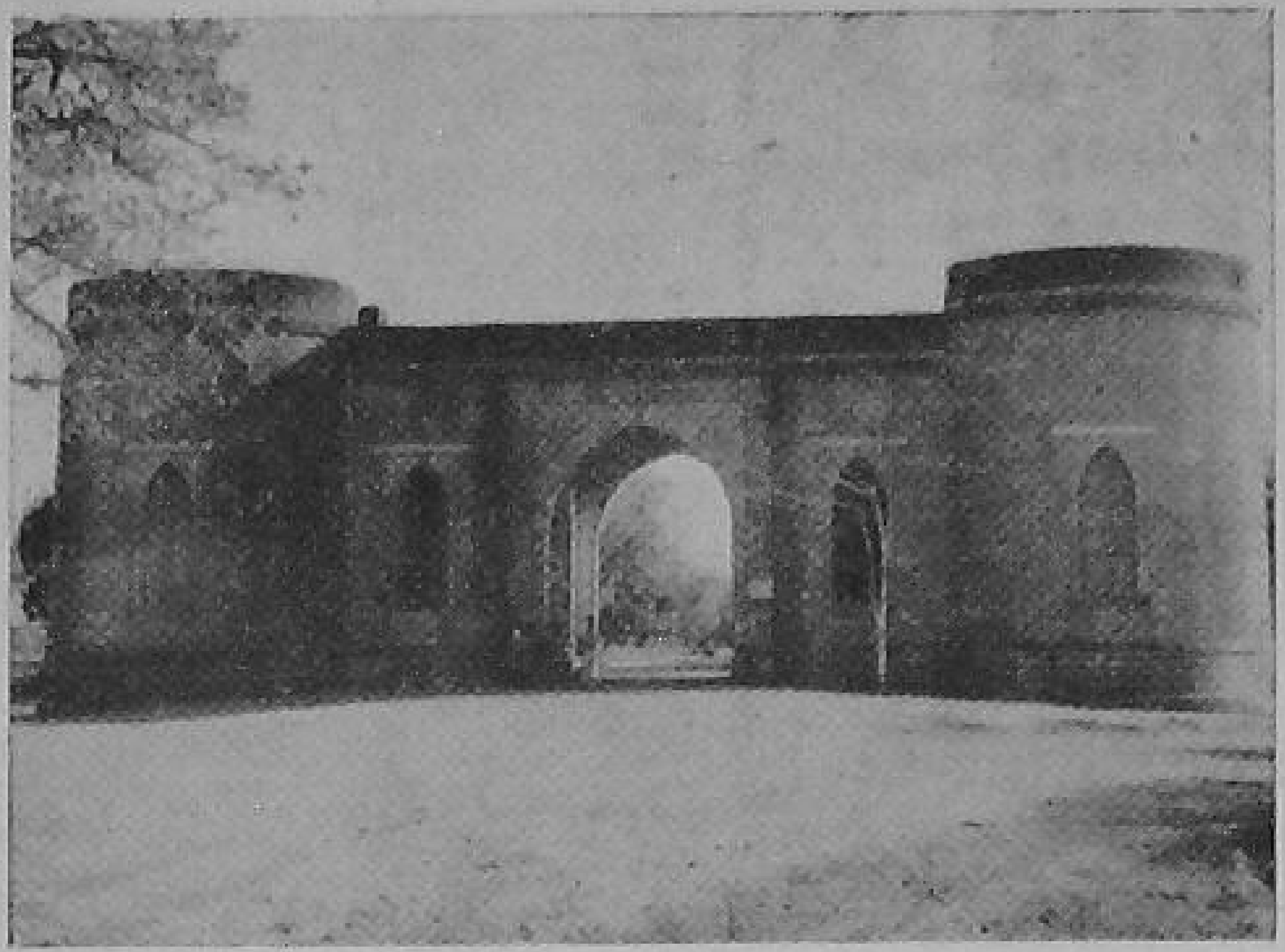
West Bengal.

It is for the Panchayats to see that they do not exceed the proper taxation limits. Generally they are reluctant to go in for more taxes. If there are some Panchayats which have the courage to impose reasonable taxes, their hands need to be strengthened. Without more money, the pace of development work cannot be speeded up. To suggest that grant-in-aid from the State Government will solve the problem is to beg the question—Ed.

IN GUJARAT

Where Panchayats have

- **TELEPHONES IN OFFICES AND**
- **SHOWER-BATHS FOR CATTLE**



Every village in erstwhile Gondal State has a gate like the one above in Gomta village.

FROM MAHARASHTRA TO GUJARAT. I spent four days in Gujarat and visited 8 panchayats in different Blocks of Baroda and Rajkot Divisions. As one travels one State to the other, one cannot resist the temptation of comparing and contrasting the past achievements and the future prospects of these two sister States which till the other day formed part of one and the same State, that is Bombay. Both are similar in more than one way. They have inherited a common stock of administrative set-up, legislative measures and other basic institutions. Both are equally eager to plan and march ahead economically and socially. But each is trying to do so according to its own genius and local circumstances. The back-log of poverty as reflected in the little developed agriculture and the less industrialised villagers of Maharashtra is more than matched by the overriding keenness and enthusiasm of its young village leaders to march ahead. The comparative advancement and prosperity of the villages of Gujarat is no less due to the sound common sense and business acumen of the common man than to a large volume of selfless and dedicated leadership at various levels. The benevolent rule of the former princes in some of the States like Baroda and Gondal has also been a very helpful factor.

In Maharashtra and Gujarat, there is an identity of approach in so far as the district level Panchayat body is sought to be armed with wide executive and supervisory powers and it is not just a co-ordinating and advisory body as in many other States. But whereas in Maharashtra, the elections to the District body are all direct, *i.e.*, by the respective Gram Sabhas, those in Gujarat are direct as well as indirect. Besides the Presidents of the Taluka Panchayats who are ex-officio members of the District Panchayat, one more member is elected by each Taluka Panchayat. In this way, Gujarat Act seeks to combine the advantages of both the systems. The things have, however, to be worked out before any apriori conclusions can be drawn. The Act comes into force early next year. All necessary preparations such as those of training the large number of officials and non-officials connected with the programme, are under way.

UNANIMOUS ELECTIONS

One thing I was particularly interested to know was their approach to unanimity in elections. It was favoured by one and all,—officials and non-officials alike. Fine traditions of unanimous elections had already been established in many areas. It was difficult to think otherwise in the land of Gandhiji. Shri Gordhan Dass Bhai,—vice-chairman of the District Panchayat Mandal, Baroda,—a very active and influential worker in that area informed me that the percentage of unanimous elections in Karjan Taluka was 82. He narrated to me how in his own village-home Ganpatpura, he had striven to get the Panchayat elected unanimously for the third time successively

Shri Devi Shankar Natha Bhai Dave,—one of the oldest Satyagrahis reading a tablet indicating the place in a Dharamshala in Navagaon village where Gandhiji halted during his Dandi march.

The choice for nominating the panchayat members had been left to him and three other persons. There were many such instances of unanimous elections to Panchayats all over the State. With all this, some change in the thinking of the people as well as the leaders was noticeable. There were talks of having elections at the district level on organised party-basis. The State Congress Party had already given its mind on the subject. Thanks to the timely lead given by the A.I.C.C., the panchayat elections would perhaps now be kept above party politics. It is hoped that the fine atmosphere created in the past by unanimity in Panchayat elections in most parts of the State would not be lost but promoted further for the common good.

On the whole, the Panchayats are well-established and have got a proud record of service. The C.D. Programme has also received a good impetus. Several factors have contributed to bring about such happy results. In the first place, rural development work received great encouragement at the hands of progressive and benevolent rulers in some of the former princely States of Baroda, Gondal, Bhavnagar etc. Besides, there is considerable impact of Gandhiji's philosophy and teachings on the people. It is reflected not only in a large number of people putting on the Khadi cap and Kurta but is to be seen and felt in the life of the people as a whole. The removal of social evils like untouchability, drinking and practices involving wasteful expenditure like death-feasts etc. have claimed the attention of the Panchayats. Due to the existence of Ashram types of institutions at several places, the village life has acquired a high moral tone. In village Ganpatpura, I saw two Ashrams *viz.*, Sanyas Ashram and Sidheshwar Ashram which exert a purifying and ennobling influence on the life of the village community.

GANDHIAN IMPACT

A large number of young workers imbued with a spirit of social service and having faith in Gandhiji's constructive programme, are doing a lot to promote the rural development work. I came across at least half a dozen active social workers in every village I visited. This is a very healthy sign and augurs well for the future progress of Panchayati Raj. There are numerous places which are sacrosanct with Gandhiji's early life and activities. You still meet some old people in the villages who cherish reminiscences of their association with Gandhiji during his early Satyagrah movements. Nava Gaon Panchayat which stood first in the Baroda Division during the village panchayat competition in 1959-60, had been the venue of Gandhiji's halt on the second night of his Dandi march. A tablet in a Dharamshala marks the place where Gandhiji stayed for the night on 14th March, 1930. Shri Devi Shankar Natha Bhai Dave, an old man of 66 narrated to me how Gandhiji had held his prayer meeting in the village and stayed there for the night. He further told me that it was from this village that the first Satyagrahi batch had gone to the

A clean and decent Harijan basti in village Ranoli.

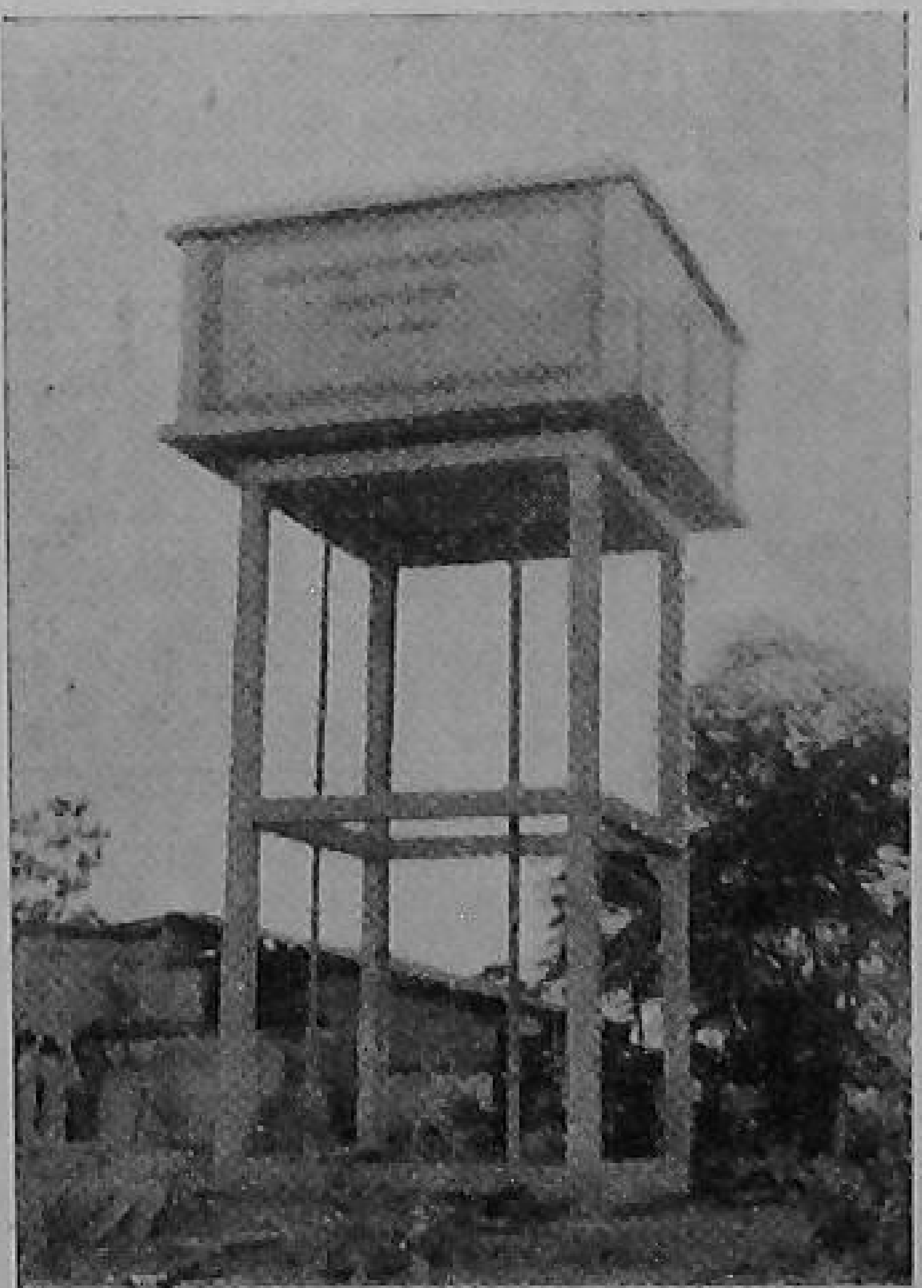
Shri Gordhan Das Bhai of Ganpatpura, Vice-chairman of the District Panchayat Mandal, Baroda.

jail during the Khera Satyagrah movement of 1918, and he was one of the Satyagrahis. It was evident that from men like him of the older generation, the whole village and the leaders of the younger generation like Gordhan Bhai Sambhu Bhai Patel who had once been the Sarpanch of the village Panchayat and is now the vice-chairman of the District Panchayat Mandal, drew inspiration.

WEAKER SECTIONS

True to Gandhian traditions, the Panchayats have paid particular attention towards the Harijans and the weaker sections. I met some members of the minority community and Harijans in villages of Ranoli, Ganpatpura, Navagaon and Gomta and inquired of them if they had any grievances against the panchayat or the majority community. But every where I got the reply that they had full faith in their Panchayats and that they were being well looked after. Their economic condition, generally did not seem to offer any serious problem and one of the reasons given was that labour in those villages was comparatively scarce and therefore they easily got a daily wage of Rs. 1.50 nP. During the agricultural seasons, labourers were not available even for Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per day. In village Ranoli, the Harijan houses were the most decent and cleanest that I have ever seen. Out of 15 families living there, perhaps none was unemployed. Their children were getting practically the same standard of education as boys and girls of the other communities. I casually met a Harijan boy named Mani Lal Bhagwan Dass aged 16 years and asked him a few particulars about his family. The reply he gave me was quite revealing. He himself was studying in the IXth class. His other 3 sisters and one brother were also studying at school. He had a married sister who studied in the Xth class. His eldest brother was employed as a clerk in the P.W.D. His father worked in a brick-kiln in Ahmedabad. I was later given to understand that this Harijan family was in no way an exceptional one but a typical one in the village. Shri Lalji Bhai Natha Bhai Solanki was the Harijan member of the panchayat and he was also the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Health & Sanitation. Under his care, the interests of the Harijans were quite safe. The Sarpanch Shri Rao ji Bhai Moti Bhai Patel, a progressive farmer who owned an orchard of 60 acres yielding an annual income of Rs. 70,000 was equally solicitious of the interests of the Harijans. He informed me that the Panchayat had decided to construct a tanning shed to provide facilities for improved tanning for the Harijans. In that way, special concessions were given to the Harijans by various Panchayats. In Ganpatpura, for instance, the backward classes were charged only Rs. 7 as against the usual Rs. 9 for supply of water from stand-posts. Another striking instance of this consideration for their weaker

The water-works built at Ganpatpura which serves as the milch-cow for development works by yielding a profit of Rs. 6,000 every year.



brethern came to my notice in Gomta village in Rajkot Division. The son of a Muslim widow, having died, there was no one to look after her. She had no house of her own. The Panchayat decided to build a house for her. The foundation-stone of the house was laid on the day I visited this village. As a result of such far-sighted and generous behaviour towards the weaker sections, the community spirit is being greatly promoted and strengthened.

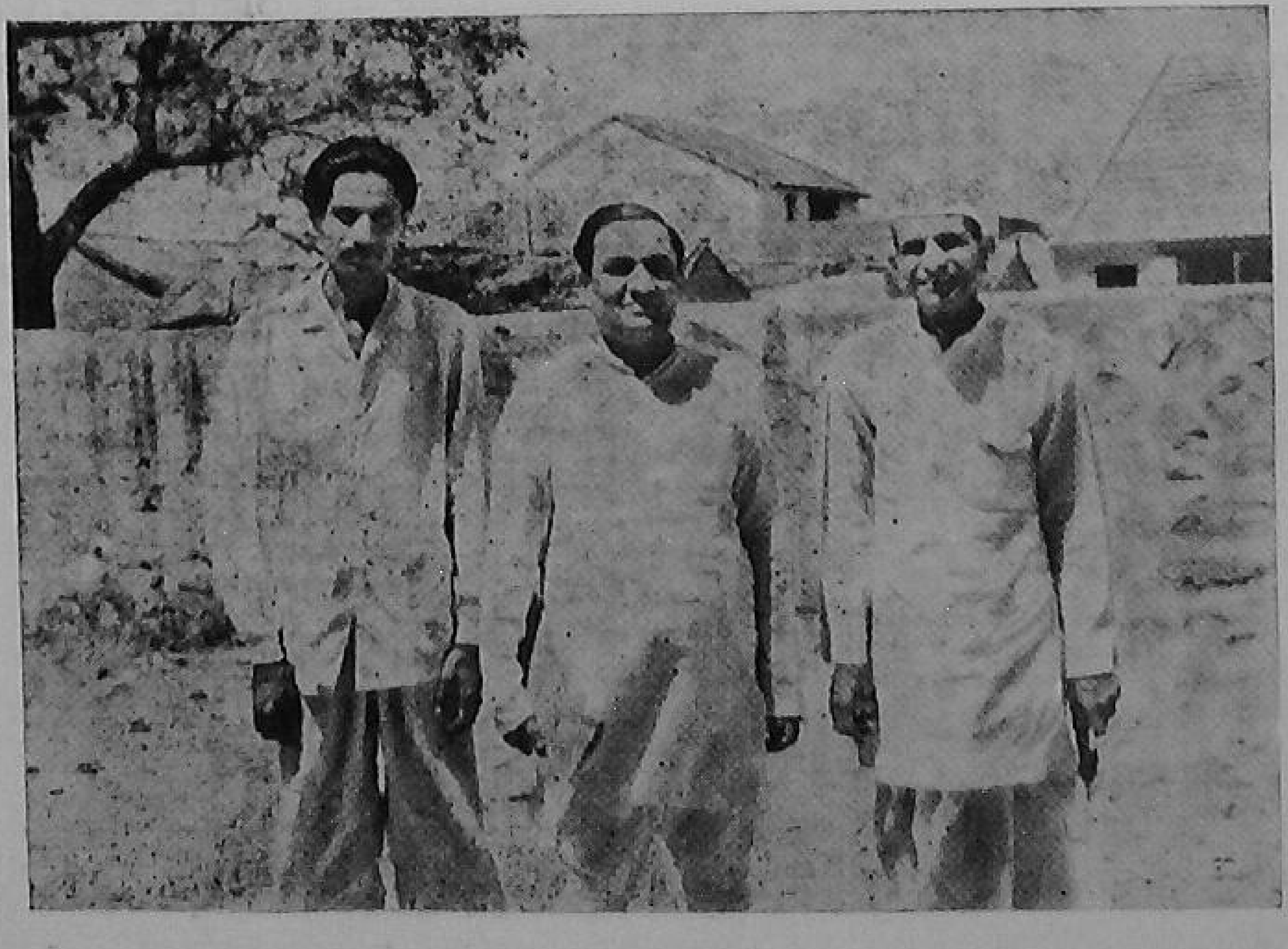
PUBLIC TRUSTS

Besides the Panchayats, it is the numerous trusts and other registered bodies financed by charities and donations from the monied people, and in Gujarat there are a lot of them carrying on business throughout India and outside particularly in Africa, that have gone a long way in improving the conditions of village life. In some cases, these public trusts are entirely financed out of some paying business concern or local Works. In Ganpatpura, for instance, it is the Water Works scheme, started and managed by a few public-spirited people under the guidance of Shri Gordhan Das Bhai, which provides the much-needed finances for the welfare and development works in the village. Initially started as a mere pumping set costing Rs. 7,000 to obviate the difficulties arising out of famine conditions in 1949, it has today become a full-fledged water works scheme with capital assets of over 24,000. Under the scheme, there is a net saving of over Rs. 6,000 every year. With this recurring profit not only piped water supply has been provided in every house, over Rs. 11,000 have been spent on local works and amenities such as public bath-rooms, a shower-bath for cattle, Dispensary, Library etc. It may be mentioned that the income of the Panchayat itself is only Rs. 6,000 per year. Similarly, in Navagaon, there are two voluntary bodies *viz.* the Gramonnati Mandal and the Education Mandal whose income is about Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 18,000 per year. This income is derived from a voluntary cess of annas six on every maund of paddy sold in the village. The income of the Panchayat is only Rs. 5,000. These Trusts give grants-in-aid even to the Panchayat for carrying out development works in the village. What an effective role, these trusts are playing in the community life of the village, will be evident from the fact that so far contributions of Rs. 1,00,000, Rs. 40,000, Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 18,000 have been made for the buildings of the High School, Primary School, Balmandir and Dispensary respectively. A recurring expenditure of Rs. 1,000 per year on the Balmandir and Library is also borne by the Education Mandal.

PANCHAYAT ESTABLISHMENT

The Panchayats are equally well established and their sources of income are also well-assured. Virpur Panchayat in Rajkot Division is a case in instance. Besides Government-grant, it has an income of about Rs. 17,000 per year,—its main sources

Workers All! (From Left to Right) *Gram Sevak, Virpur, Shri Daulat Rai Seth, District Village Panchayat Officer, Shri J. G. Antani, Asstt. Commissioner (Panchayat) Rajkot.*



being Octroi, tax on shops, licence on vehicles and income from sale of refuse etc. It has got 18 employees and pays them over Rs. 800 per month as salary. It has got a well-furnished and fully equipped office. Its office equipment consisting of things like Godrej Almirahs, a Wall-Clock, Radio-set and a Telephone etc. · costs over Rs. 3,000. Many a Government-office will look small before such a Panchayat office.

THE PROGRAMME

In so far as the welfare and amenities programme is concerned, the Panchayats have set up a splendid record. Infact they had a long tradition of carrying out welfare works since the days of former princely States. Under the enlightened rule of Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, the State had made great progress in the field of education, and schools, libraries and dispensaries had been started in a number of villages. It is understood that in the small State of Gondal, the rulers had ensured a link road, a gate, a telephonic connection and a school in every village. The conception of aided self-help programme and an integrated outlook of rural development had taken root in the villages even in those days—long before the C.D. Programme was initiated. The C.D. Programme simply gave it a greater impetus. The result is that today many panchayats have reached a saturation point in so far as the amenities programme is concerned. They have got all that a progressive panchayat, would like to have,—a link road, paved streets, street lighting, piped water supply, a School, a Balwadi, a library and a dispensary etc. For them now to think of further amenities programme is either to have a public sprayer for cattle or a portable fire engine and such other requirements. It is high time that the tempo of activities was switched on to the production programme,—agricultural as well as industrial. As a result of the increased use of fertilisers and improved seeds, the agricultural production has no doubt, generally gone up by about 50%. But there is considerable scope for more intensive cultivation through greater irrigation facilities. Several farmers with whom I had a talk, for instance, in Ganpatpura, Virpura and Gomta, were averse to the increase of irrigated area. They thought that to do so would be uneconomical. The Extension Officer, Jetpur Block, who by the way, is an officiating Gram Sevak, could not give us a scientific and convincing explanation. The matter needs closer examination so that the cultivators could be persuaded to give up their superstition against more intensive wet cultivation. The Anand Dairy in Kheda district has proved its great utility by improving the economic condition of a number of surrounding villages. There is a great scope for starting dairies on co-operative basis at various other places in the State, particularly in Saurashtra.

As in most other parts of the country, the village and small industries have not yet made their impact on the economic life of the people. The rural industrialisation programme, as newly oriented awaits to be given early trial.

THE CO-ORDINATION

It was heartening to observe that cordial relations prevailed between the Revenue and the Development Departments. The following measures have been taken by the State Government to achieve the desired co-ordination between the two departments: —(i) a common cadre of the Patwari-*cum*-Panchayat Secretary has been evolved (ii) the District Panchayat Officer acts as the P.A. to the Collector (iii) the B.D.O. also acts as Asstt. Panchayat Officer (iv) Panchayats carry out the work of revenue collection.

The successful working of the Panchayats has been in no small measure due to the harmonious relations between the officials and the non-officials. To Gujarat State goes the credit of taking the bold step of recruiting tried social workers as Government officials in the Panchayat and Development Departments at various levels. This has resulted in breaking down of the artificial barrier between the two categories of workers. It has also injected a new

(*Continued on page 11*)

A MODEL FARME

(From our Spec

It is often remarked that farming is not so paying as industry or business. To a large number of our peasants, agriculture is never an economic proposition, but just a way of life. It is seldom realised that if proper planning is done, farming too can be made as economical as any business or industry. This has been proved by Shri Raoji Bhai Moti Bhai Patel who has brought to bear a business mind on the development of his 60 acre farm in Ranoli,—12 miles from Baroda.

When I visited him last month, he was working in his farm. He took me round and showed me with pride and enthusiasm every bit of his farm. I saw trees, trees and nothing but the trees alround. After I had gone halfway, I still saw no signs of a usual farm that one expects. And so, I inquired of him rather impatiently, "How far is the farm?" Giving a smile, Shri Raoji Bhai informed me that that was the farm itself. I soon realised that it was more an orchard than a farm. He grew fruit trees on 55 acres and fodder and foodgrains on a plot of 5 acres only. "Why so much emphasis on fruit-growing in preference to foodgrains?" I asked, "Yes, that is the secret of my success", he remarked. Continuing, he explained to me that he believed only in one principle, that of getting the maximum possible from the mother earth. "Consequently, I grow only such things in my farm which bring me the greatest possible sale-proceeds," he added. "What are the principal crops you grow?" I asked. He replied, "fodder and foodgrains are the least paying, and so I grow them on a 5-acre plot only so that I get just enough for the requirements of my family and 6 bullocks. I grow fruit trees like mangoes, chikku and lemon on the remaining farm". "Why mangoes and chikku particularly? Is there any special reason?" I asked. "Yes", prompt came the reply, "I believe in quality rather than quantity. I have been able to get the best quality mangoes—Dasheri, Langra etc. which are even exported to Europe and other foreign countries, and I make the most out of the bargain. The chikku grown in my orchard is also of a special variety. It has been grafted on rayon and is very much in demand." "What other main cash crops do you grow?" I asked. "Tobacco", was his reply. "What is the annual income from the farm?" was my next question. He replied, "Rs. 70,000 in all and if you deduct the expenditure, Rs. 40,000 as net profit." "Not a bad bargain", he added, "particularly when you consider that my investment is just two tube wells costing Rs. 20,000 and 6 bullocks costing Rs. 5,000 only". "What about the land?" I interjected. In a thoughtful mood, he replied, "of course, it is there. My father got it fifty years ago. Then it was a waste-land and provided shelter to dacoits and wild animals. Its owners being big landlords wanted to get

Cow-dung gas being used for cooking purposes.

AND SARPANCH

orrespondent)

rid of it and so disposed it of very cheap".

After a round of the farm was completed, we returned to a beautiful bungalow situated in the farm itself. Here shri Raoji Bhai lives with his family. As I went inside, I saw the ladies cooking on a gas stove. The gas used was no other than that supplied from a cow-dung gas plant set up on the farm itself. My curiosity was aroused. I had read and heard so much about cow-dung gas plants but had never come across a unit working satisfactorily. So I inquired if his gas plant was giving trouble-free service. He replied, "Yes. I used to spend Rs. 500 every year on the fuel requirements of my family. Now I do not spend a single Naya Paisa on it for the cow-dung gas plant meets our requirements fully. I have also got one or two lighting points in the orchard. If there is any trouble in the plant, the Bharat Sevak Samaj arranges free technical service." "Do you get enough cow-dung from your 6 bullocks to produce gas for your requirements?" He said, "Enough and to spare. In fact, I am now thinking of filling cylinders of the extra gas and selling them in the market. That will bring me some more money". I could not help marvelling at his ingenuity. Surely, here was a businessman turned a farmer. He could literally make money out of dung.

Shri Raoji Bhai is not only a successful farmer but an able Sarpanch, too. He takes equal interest in the progress of the panchayat affairs. Ranoli is one of the leading panchayats in Gujarat. It holds regular sittings. During the past year, it has had 21 meetings. As a result of the Sarpanch's sound commonsense and business acumen, the panchayat has succeeded in improving its financial resources considerably. It has now an annual budget of Rs. 12,000. The village has got every amenity and facility such as panchayat ghar, balmandir, school, library, dispensary, piped water supply, public bath-rooms, street-lighting and paved streets. It is now contemplating to have foot-baths and shower-baths for cattle and portable fire-engines for use in times of emergency. When completed, these projects will be the envy of any panchayat in the country.

* * *

Shri Raoji Bhai, in his role as Sarpanch presides over a meeting of Ranoli Panchayat.

SOME TRUE STORIES

L. O. JOSHI

Shri L.O. Joshi, the narrator of these stories, is Chief Secretary, Delhi Administration.. He has had plenty of field experience of the working of Panchayats and Rural Development work as an officer of the Holkar Civil Service in the former Indore State, as Collector and as Secretary, Development and Local Self-Government department in the erstwhile State of Madhya Bharat now merged in Madhya Pradesh. Like him every Administrator or a field worker, at some stage of his life and work is beset with one problem or the other to solve which he must have been called upon to tax all his skill, ingenuity and patience.. The story of his struggle and efforts and how he achieved success is likely to be of immense help to his other comrades working in the field. We, therefore, invite the Development Officers at various levels, the Pradhans and Sarpanches to communicate to us their true stories which might serve as "foot-prints on the sands of time" for others to follow—Ed.

A PANCHAYAT BUILDS UP ITS REMUNERATIVE ASSETS

In the year 1952-53, I was Collector of Dhar District (or the then Part 'B' State of Madhya Bharat). A month before I joined, a beautiful avenue of one thousand mangoes was planted beside the road leading to the monument of the well-known Mandu Fort. The plantation was done by the Prime Minister and the avenue was named, "Jawahar Avenue". The function and the enthusiasm associated therewith were soon over and I noticed that the saplings began to wither for want of attention and watering. I contacted the Kendra Panchayat (the second tier of the Panchayat system) in whose area the avenue lay and asked them whether they would take over the avenue, with the ultimate object of having a recurring annual income. Of course, they were required to take care of the plants for the initial 4 or 5 years. I also told them that having participated in the plantation programme and having named the avenue after the country's most popular leader, it would be unpardonable if the Panchayat neglected it and ignored the possibility of strengthening their resources through the income from it, in due course. Their greatest hurdle was the lack of finances required in the initial stages. I had noticed from an Information Bulletin that for our 'Vanmahotsav', it was considered as a paying proposition if a good fruit tree was established within an expenditure of Rs. 15. we, therefore, offered to the Panchayat a loan upto Rs. 15 per mango tree, so that they could arrange watering, setting up of tree guards and replacement of withered plants. The Panchayat agreed after some hesitation,—the argument which prevailed with them was that an established mango tree would give them more than Rs. 15 per tree every season. The saplings have now grown into full-fledged trees and promise a rich harvest as well as a well-deserved income to the Panchayat.

Moral :—*Panchayats should always be on the look-out for building up lasting assets, so that they may be able to discharge their multifarious functions more efficiently and*

effectively. Occasions like ceremonial functions and festivities can also be utilised to good purpose with proper guidance and follow-up.

* * *

STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT

The Collector and myself were on tour in the interior of Zirapur Tehsil (now in Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh). On the way, we passed through a village of about 150 families. As usual, the village panches and other villagers had collected to meet us in a group outside the village. While we were discussing their problems and complaints, one of the villagers brought a pitcher of water from the direction opposite to the village. As this was rather unusual, I asked them whether they did not have a good drinking water well in the village itself. I was told that there was one such well built about 15 years ago. Its masonry had given way and since then the villagers had to fetch water either from the filthy *nala* or from a well about a mile away. The reconstruction of the well was not taken up because there were two factions in the village. I realised immediately that this was a felt-need of the village and that it was within the villagers' capacity to reconstruct the well. The only thing which stood in their way was the internal jealousy and factions between different parties and groups amongst the villagers. So, after drinking our glasses of water, I offered the villagers Rs. 2 and Re. 1 for each glass of water, telling them that if they collected similar amounts for the quantities which each family consumed, the well would be ready in no time. They expected that Government would give them grants for the well, but I explained that their case would stand low in the order of priority because, there were many other villages which had no sources of drinking water nearby. They hesitated to accept this amount, but promised to collect their contributions and reconstruct the well. However, I made it a point of honour for them and told them that I would not accept this amount back, unless they collected the subscriptions by the time we returned from our trip to the other village. We returned by the evening and found that the entire village had collected the subscriptions, regardless of their affiliations. This was in the first week of May and rains come in that part of the country in the third week of June. I, therefore, exhorted them to start construction and finish the work before the rains came in and as a guarantee that the work would be done in time, I refused to accept back my amount of Rs. 2 The entire village got enthused about the programme and besides the cash contributions which were collected on the spot, each family contributed in labour, with the result that the well was ready in about 3 weeks' time.

Moral :— *A Development Officer has to locate the felt-need and enthuse the people to plan and execute a programme which will meet the need within a prescribed time-limit. The maxim to be kept in view in such instances is: "Strike while the iron is hot". Do not allow their enthusiasm to cool down.*

IN GUJARAT

(*Continued from page 7*)

element in the administrative machinery which by virtue of its spirit of selfless service is able to evoke people's participation in various Government schemes. I had the opportunity of moving during my tours with two such officers. It was an experience to observe the influence and popularity that they commanded with the common people. Clad in their simple Khadi they moved about freely amongst the people who hailed them as "Bhai" wherever they went. I was given to understand that Shri G.F. Mankodi, I.A.S; the present Development Commissioner of the State also belongs to the same category of social workers. With a long tradition of active and well-established panchayats and a fine set-up of official and non-official workers, the Panchayati Raj in Gujarat bids fair to be a great success—Ed.

LOK SABHA DEBATE

We give below a gist of some of the important speeches by the Members and the Minister's reply in connection with the debate held on the 10th and 11th May in the Lok Sabha on the demands for grants of the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation—Ed.

SHRI SARIJU Pandey, initiating the debate said that there was no uniformity in co-operative laws of different States and that a few influential persons, particularly the ex-zamindars, had got control of the co-operative credit and other societies and were using them to further their own ends. He pleaded for a committee to be appointed to go into the working of all types of co-operative societies in the country and for laying down a uniform pattern for them.

Shri D. S. Chaudhuri held the opposite view and thought that the co-operative societies had been making remarkable progress. Corruption was the least prevalent in the co-operative as compared to other departments of the Government.

Shri Lehri Singh observed that though the community development programme was started as far back as 1952 it had not achieved much and the insanitary conditions in villages continued as before and it was only when some high officials or dignitaries went there, that a clean-up was done which did not convey the reality.

Shri A. S. Saigal suggested that the registration of Co-operative societies should be made easier and the co-operative laws and rules should be made simpler.

Shri Yogendra Jha felt that the allocations made in the plans for community development were insufficient and even the money allocated was not spent. There was too much expenditure on administration which must be reduced.

Shri A. C. Guha thought that there was some truth in the criticism that the Panchayati Raj had only benefited the stronger sections of the community and that it had led to communalism, casteism and groupism in villages. But the difficulties and problems had to be faced. According to him, party politics on a cleaner basis was the only remedy for village rivalries and cliques. If the political parties openly entered the field of elections without directly influencing the people on the basis of castes, etc., most of our difficulties would be overcome. He further expressed the view that there should be central legislation on Panchayati Raj with a view to ensuring its uniform working in different States.

Shrimati Subhadra Joshi regretted that no efforts were made by any department of the Government to help the co-operative societies in the matter of finances or other facilities. According to her many a co-operative society started by ordinary people had failed due to lack of finance and encouragement from the Government.

Shri Ram Sewak Yadav felt that the panchayats had not been given adequate powers. Real decentralisation of administration and the development of villages could not take place unless the panchayats were given powers in the matter of finance as also in the matter of enacting rules and making appointments.

Shri P. R. Chakraverti pleaded for a uniform system of Panchayati Raj on the model of Mysore where a member of the Block Panchayat Samiti seeks election from a wider electorate with a definite programme and policy. He also thought that village level worker was burdened with enormous responsibilities; he should be asked to cover a population of not more than 2,000. He should also be the secretary of the village panchayat.

Shri D. N. Tiwary felt that the report of the Ministry had presented a rosy picture although there was the other side of the picture also. The

main objectives of community development, viz. removal of rural indebtedness and making the village self-supporting had not been achieved so far.

Shri Kolla Venkaiah thought that the community development programme had not benefited the common man. According to him, the rights of the tenants on lands had not been protected in many cases. Land ceiling Act had proved a hoax in many States.

Shri P. Venkatasubhaiah thought that the Panchayati Raj had made tremendous progress in the villages, especially in Andhra Pradesh where the recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee had been put into effect. But, there was lack of co-ordination so far as the State Government and the Centre were concerned. He pleaded for a comprehensive Panchayati Raj legislation for all States in the country.

Shri Nazir Hussain thought that the community development programme was bringing about a silent revolution in the rural side. It was, however, true that half of the population, that is, the women, had no hand in the working of the panchayats or the co-operatives. No effort had been made to bring them in.

Shri K. N. Tiwary thought that the B.D.O. should not be entrusted with development as well as revenue collection work. There should be bifurcation of these duties and revenue collection should be entrusted to some other officer. He was also of the view that the gram panchayats should not be given powers all at once. Power should be given to them by stages after judging their work in the various fields.

Shri H. C. Soy did not consider the achievements of Community Development, Panchayati Raj & Co-operation Ministry as impressive. He suggested that the function of collecting land revenue should be transferred from the zila parishads to the gram panchayats so that their resources could be augmented. Fifty percent of the income from the jungles should be distributed between the zila parishads and the gram panchayats. The panchayats should also be given fifty percent income from the excise.

Shri Narayan Das felt that the programme had not been able to stimulate initiative and develop institutions in the desired way. He pleaded for the propagation of the idea of unanimous elections to prevent factionalism in the villages. He suggested that efforts should be made to see that the gram sabhas became active and the energies of the people were properly harnessed.

Dr. G. S. Melkote was of the view that the villages had been receiving a lot of attention as a result of the community development projects and the co-operative movement. According to him, the villagers themselves were getting educated and the leadership was growing from the village sector itself.

Replying to the debate, Shri S. K. Dey, Minister of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, said that the re-organization of the Ministry by the President (by adding 'Panchayati Raj') recognized the importance Panchayati Raj had acquired in the eyes of the people. Referring to the importance attached to agricultural programmes, he said that a beginning had been made in the programme of modernizing agriculture. As regards the programme of village industries, he said that they were trying to build it up, in collaboration with other Ministries and agencies, starting with the provision of improved implements and tools and supplies to village artisans and improved common facility centres. To the 20 rural industrial estates started in the second Plan there would be added another 300 in the Third Plan.

Referring to the steps taken to carry the message of community development to schools, Shri Dey said that school teachers were receiving special training in community development, co-operation and panchayati raj in the teachers' training colleges under a programme. Special teachers of these training colleges had been trained by the Ministry.

(Continued on page 15)

FROM THE CENTRE

TRAINING OF TRAINERS OF GRAM SAHAYAKS

THE UNION Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, has in a circular letter addressed to all the State Governments drawn their attention towards the necessity of arranging a phased programme of one week's training of all the trainers of Gram Sahayaks by the end of this year. It has been suggested that the orientation course may be arranged particularly for the extension officers, (Agriculture), (Animal Husbandry) (Panchayats) and (Social Education).

* * *

MUSSOOREE SEMINAR

THE SEMINAR on Public Administration in Panchayati Raj held at Mussooree recommended that consistent with efficiency and economy, political devolution and administrative decentralisation should proceed simultaneously to the lowest possible level.

In accordance with this principle, functions should be assigned to the level of government which is capable of their discharge. The Seminar felt that matters of police and judiciary with the exception of village guards and the nyaya panchayats should vest in the States. Similarly, higher technical guidance and functions where local interests were likely to conflict with State policy would have to remain with the States.

With a view to ensuring the efficient and economical functioning of Panchayati Raj units, the Seminar felt that the State had every right to exercise authority over them.

The Seminar stressed that the responsibility for execution of functions should be clearly demarcated between the Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and the Panchayat.

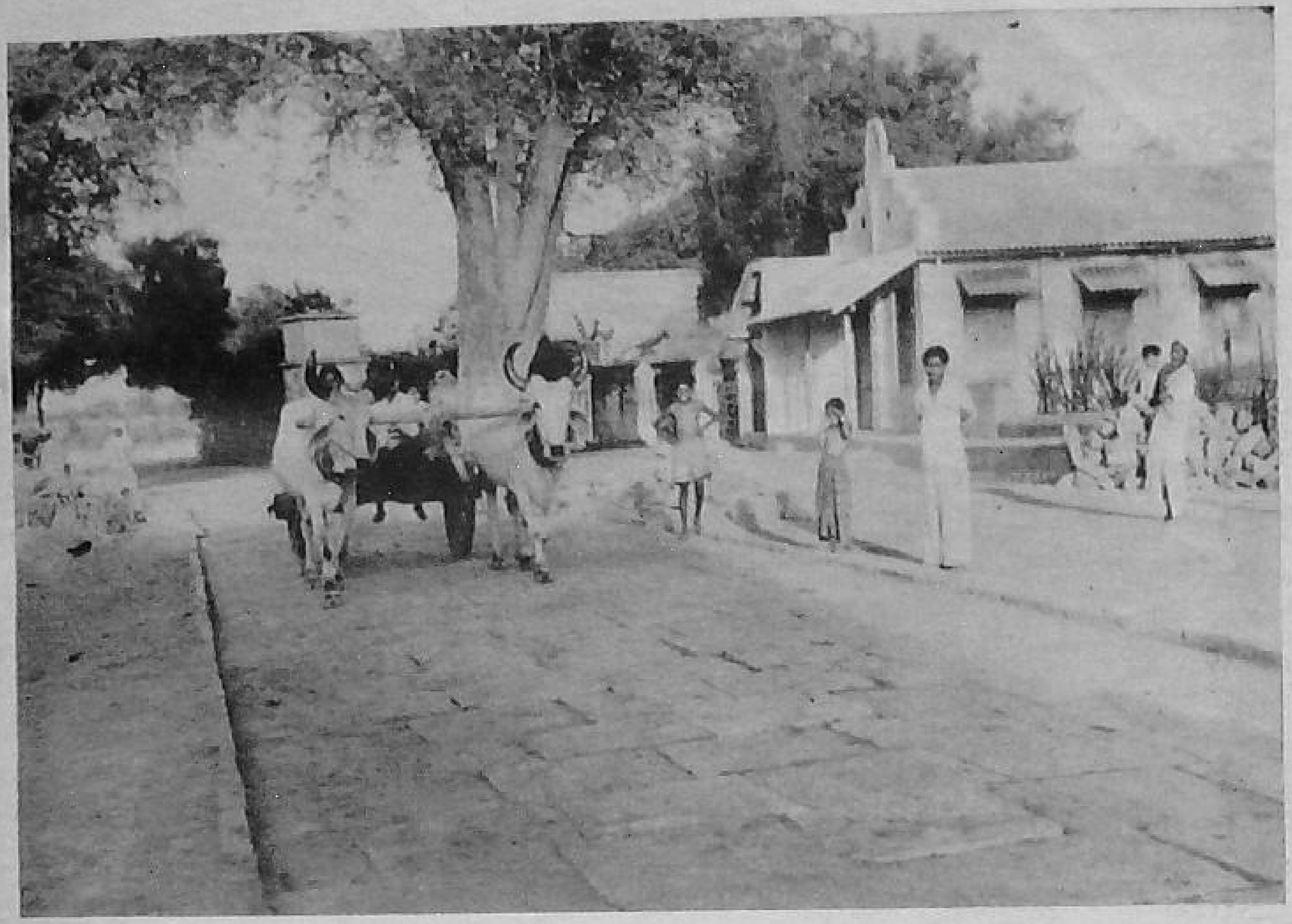
Dealing with the financial aspects of the Panchayati Raj, the Seminar was of the view that the main resources for a Gram Panchayat consisted of taxation arising out of land revenue and local cess tax on markets and fairs, fisheries and receipts from property tax, a capitation tax which could be paid in the form of labour, tax on animals and bullock carts and taxes levied by the State Government on transfer of property in rural areas, entertainment tax etc. The Seminar recommended that a minimum of 25 percent of the land revenue should go to the Gram Panchayat and another 25 per cent to the Panchayat Samitis. Besides this, additional revenue could also be raised in the form of a surcharge on land revenue to be levied by these units. It was urged that the State Government should constitute an equalisation grant from a portion of the land revenue which could be allocated to areas which were economically backward. It was envisaged that ultimately the entire land revenue would be allocated to the Panchayati Raj bodies, and great importance would be attached to the effective assessment and collection of all taxes by the Gram Panchayat. The Seminar urged that provision should also be made for levying special taxes for specific purposes, for example construction of school buildings or any other kind of capital expenditure to be incurred on amenities in the local area. However the levy of such taxes, it was suggested, should be approved by the entire Gram Sabha. The Seminar advocated the provision of financial assistance in the form of loans and grants to the Panchayati Raj institutions for developing remunerative community assets like fisheries and forest and other activities.

CORRIGENDUM

Reference story of Madhya Pradesh's best V. L. W., published in the May issue of Panchayati Raj, his place of posting Ghusgaon is in Morena district and not Bhind district, as published earlier. The mistake is regretted—Ed.

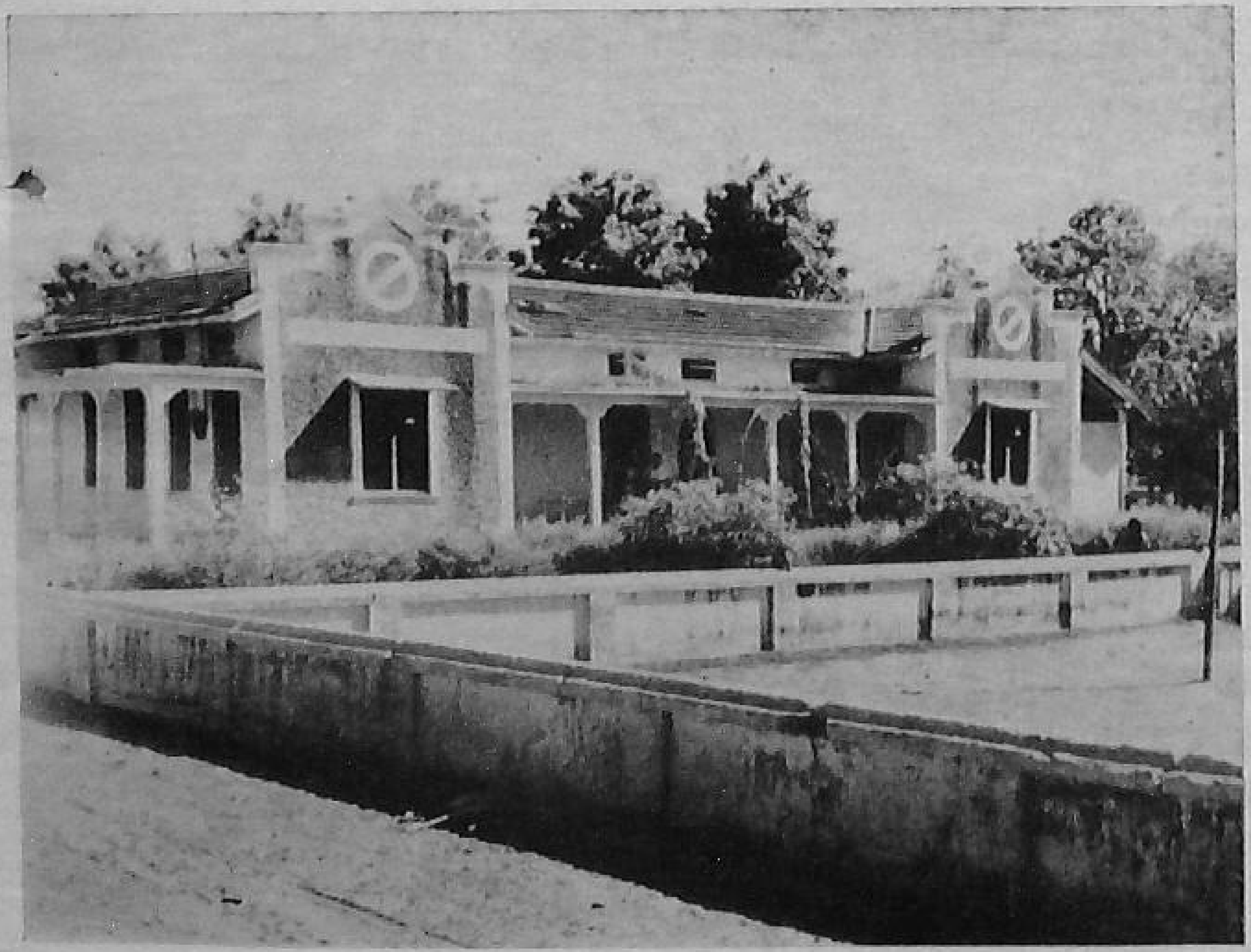
PANCHAYATS IN GUJARAT

AMENITIES PROGRAMME



Village Roads have been made pacca. This is a pacca road in village Ganpatpura.

The cattle, too, relish shower-baths. Here is one set up Ganpatpura village.



A magnificent building serves as a maternity centre in Ranoli.

An imposing building has been constructed to serve as a school in Gomta.

A common sight in Saurashtra villages near cities. Villagers, men as well as women bring milk in pots for sale in the market. More and more Dairy Co-operatives are the need of the hour.

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